



## Legislative Bulletin.....May 9, 2001

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H.R. 581—Wildland Fire Management Act

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### H.R. 581— Wildland Fire Management Act (Hefley)

**Order of Business:** This bill is scheduled to be considered on Wednesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, under an open rule.

**Summary:** This bill would authorize the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to transfer funds already appropriated in the FY2001 Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for the costs of complying with the Endangered Species Act. Specifically, before agencies may reduce hazardous fuels (such as dead and diseased timber and underbrush) on federal lands, they must, among other things, consult with other federal agencies on projects that may affect endangered species. Thus, this bill clarifies that the FWS and the NMFS may be reimbursed by the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior for costs incurred from such consultation.

**Cost to Taxpayers:** This bill would establish no new budget authority. The CBO estimates that this bill would authorize the Department of Agriculture to reimburse FWS and NMFS for \$11 million in 2001 (--the Department of the Interior has determined that it already has the authority to reimburse such costs under current law.). The CBO also estimates that this bill would accelerate spending of funds already appropriated (by \$3 million in 2001) but reduce direct spending by the same amount in 2002.

**Does the Bill Create New Federal Programs or Rules?:** No, it authorizes transfers of funds already appropriated.

**Constitutional Authority:** Committee Report 107-35 cites Article I, Section 8 as the source of constitutional authority but fails to cite a specific clause.

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